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FM AIT TAIPEI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8731
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 8183
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 9534
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 9851
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 2626
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 1187
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 9421
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY 2004
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 6593
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1840
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0060
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000551

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/TC, IO/T AND OES
PASS TO HHS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/21/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV TBIO WHO AORC CH TW

SUBJECT: TAIWAN'S "SECOND STAGE" WHA EFFORT: BACK TO
OBSERVERSHIP

Classified By: AIT Director Stephen M. Young. Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Fully expecting WHO to reject President Chen Shui-bian's letter to WHO Director-General Margaret Chan applying for WHO membership, MOFA plans a "second stage" effort applying for observership. MOFA hopes the World Health Assembly (WHA) opening sessions on May 19 can host a two-by-two debate on observership that would not delay the day's meetings. Arguing that this approach will be a bridge for the incoming, more pragmatic Ma Ying-jeou administration which takes office on May 20, MOFA requests U.S. (and Japan and EU) support for this latter "more moderate" effort. Action request in para 8. End Summary.

¶2. (C) MOFA/IO Dir-Gen David Lin requested a meeting with Japan Interchange Association (JIA) Political Chief Koichi Itoh and AIT Political Chief on April 18 to discuss Taiwan's WHA plans, explaining that he met with EU reps the preceding day. Lin stated that President Chen Shui-bian's letter to WHO Director-General Margaret Chan was actually "stage one" of a two-stage process. President Chen, he said, had personally made the decision to send the letter applying for Taiwan WHO membership and expressing willingness to accept observership in response to pressure from his deep-Green supporters. The letter was delivered April 17 to the WHO Secretariat in Geneva, which will likely return it to Taiwan

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or one of its diplomatic partners sometime in the next day or two.

¶3. (C) With "stage one" effectively ended and Taiwan not planning to push a full-scale membership drive as it did last year, Lin explained, "stage two" will kick in: a separate WHA agenda proposal by Taiwan allies in support of WHA observer status for "Taiwan" (a draft of which has been e-mailed to EAP/TC). MOFA requested the meetings to elicit U.S., Japan, and EU support for the WHA agenda proposal, which, Lin stressed, is "just a draft that can be modified."

MOFA "seeks U.S. and Japan advice" on the draft wording in order to prepare a revised draft acceptable to Taiwan's friends so that the final resolution can be submitted by the May 13 deadline for agenda proposals.

¶4. (C) Lin explained that MOFA is trying, with its "more moderate" second-stage approach to WHA, to smooth the transition for the new Ma Ying-jeou government that will take office the next day on May 20. Acknowledging that Ma publicly advocated Taiwan apply for observership under the name "Chinese Taipei," Lin insisted that, based on his close contact with the Ma camp, Ma is actually flexible on nomenclature. (Comment: We have no indication that this flexibility extends to the extent of accepting the term "Taiwan," however.)

¶5. (C) Taiwan hopes to pursue a 2-by-2 discussion on its agenda proposal in the WHA sessions on May 19, Lin explained. Taiwan does not want to delay the WHA meeting, and thus hopes that following the 2-by-2 format will be less disruptive and will avoid a vote on the resolution. Using the 2-by-2 format in the WHA meetings, Lin argued, will also obviate all 23 Taiwan allies speaking up and, thus, will not delay the WHA meetings.

¶6. (C) Lin requested U.S. and Japanese views on the draft proposal for Taiwan WHA observer status, stressing that Taiwan is willing to modify the wording in response to suggestions. AIT and JIA's Itoh pointed out that the wording of the draft WHA agenda appeared problematic. For example, applying for Taiwan "to participate in the WHA as an observer before it is admitted to the WHO as a full member" would appear to commit the WHA to membership for Taiwan, an unacceptable commitment to the PRC and many members. Lin responded that Taiwan could "just drop that phrase,"

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reiterating that this is "only a draft" and inviting U.S. and Japanese suggestions. FM James Huang, he explained, will determine the final agenda proposal without recourse to the Presidential Office, Lin opined, but Huang would be on much stronger ground if he did so based on "feedback from the U.S. and Japan."

¶7. (C) When Lin complained that there had been no progress regarding Taiwan participation in the WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR's), AIT and JIA responded by acknowledging this regrettable state of affairs, but pointing out that Taiwan exclusion had been exacerbated by its decision last year to push for full membership under the name "Taiwan." Lin responded by emphasizing that Taiwan will not continue pushing its membership application this year, unlike last year. AIT noted that President Chen's letter, which contravened his earlier public pledge to work with the incoming Ma administration in devising Taiwan's WHA strategy this year, represented a lost opportunity at this critical juncture to push forward Taiwan participation in WHO. Lin responded that MOFA hopes the damage "can be contained" and that Taiwan can begin to move forward in WHO by focusing on MOFA's more moderate second stage. This, he argued, is in line with Ma's more pragmatic approach and with U.S. and Japan support for observership.

¶8. (C) Action Request: MOFA/IO Director-General Lin requests U.S. views and suggestions regarding the proposed WHA agenda proposal (e-mailed to EAP/TC in the classified channel) before Taiwan coordinates with its WHO-member allies.

YOUNG